BRYAN FERRY

MAGAZINE

BOYS *and* GIRLS

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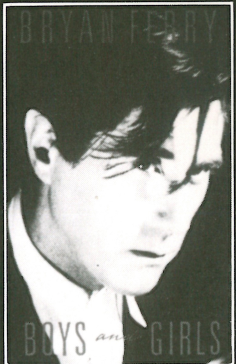

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BRYAN FERRY MAGAZINE

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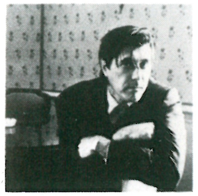

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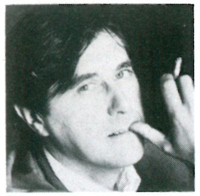

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BOYS AND GIRLS

BY PETER NOMIS

In 1982, after ten years in which their star had risen from brazen cult acclaim to emblazoned popular idolisation, Roxy Music disbanded. It's increasingly unquestionable that they were that decade's most consistently original and influential force in rock'n'roll, their work continually challenging established ideas and tired conventions - and even, with each successive album, the new standards they themselves had set with the previous one. Most remarkably it was a trajectory which drew an ever-larger and ever-delighted audience in its wake: not everyone, it seemed, preferred the same old scene... But that tale needs no telling.[1]

And now, out of the blue, Bryan Ferry invites you to play...

Well... what?

Maybe the oldest game in the world.

What on earth's it called? Cowboys and indians? Doctors and nurses?

It's called boys and girls.

How can we play what we already are?

Because make believing is the real thing.[2]

How do we enter?

We already have.

What's the object?

To win and lose.

What's the subject?

Love and hate.

What's to expect?

To cheat and be cheated.

It doesn't seem right.

You've got no sense of fun.

You know I've one.[3]

You know, I've won.

I'm lost... Where do we begin?

At the outside edge. Then we go round and round in circles, getting closer to the centre all the time. But we'll never reach it - just flip totally and have to start all over again.

Like a record!

Like life... There are two sides to everything.

So which side am I on?

You're on your own.

How do we finish?

We don't... It's a right old carry-on.

You can carry on playing 'Boys And Girls', over and over (like flipping a double-headed coin), and never lose.

Although he hasn't put out a record for three years, Bryan Ferry is still ahead of the game. Still breaking rules by making rules, still unhemmed and unhampered by current fashion because he himself fashioned a lot of it - and discarded it and moved on - years ago before it stitched itself up into another modish straightjacket, his new album is liable to confuse as it captivates, raise eyebrows along with spirits, strike home but as always elude the pigeon-hole, becoming rather all things to all men - a window on the soul (poet), a fever on the brow (physician), an assault on the senses (sensualist), a weight off the mind (worrier), an eye-opener (somn ophile), music for pleasure (hedonist), music for airports (traveller), the bee's knees (entomologist), and so on... Perhaps the truth, after all, is that *it's nothing but a game to play.*[4]

It's nothing if not hard to pin down. It's not even useful to call it Ferry's sixth solo album[5] since it sounds not unlike Roxy Music a stage further on - and why not? The earlier albums under his own name were in a sense personal digressions punctuating Ferry's major and ever-progressing oeuvre with Roxy, and they frequently explored other areas of music, for example cover versions - highly original nevertheless - of standards (on 'These Foolish Things') or of r'n'b classics (on much of 'The Bride Stripped Bare'). But on 'Boys and Girls' all the material is Ferry's own, and would have emerged as it does whatever the name attached. And if two Roxy Music members are absent from this recording, many more than two of the players from the band's last album are present.[6]

The continuity is ultimately manifest, of course, in the music itself: it's a leap beyond 'Avalon' (just as 'Avalon' was beyond 'Flesh & Blood'), yet uniquely recognisable, less - with hindsight - as Roxy's collective style than as Ferry's own: really not so surprising considering that he was the group's founder, composer, arranger, pianist, lyricist, singer...

And leader. Ferry has long shown great skill as a musical 'director', inspiring and channelling other players, coaxing and cajoling from them ideal - and often unexpected - performances. His records have never been fragmentary affairs where 'vocal', 'backing', 'instrumental solo', 'coloration' are conceived, created or caught as separate elements which fit mechanically together by conventional patterning. Instead, although his work possesses all the immediacy and classic melodic strength of great

1 Or if it does, see 'The Bryan Ferry Story' by Rex Balfour (1976), Bryan Ferry and 'Roxy Music' by Barry Lazell & Dafydd Rees (1982), 'Roxy Music' by Johnny Rogan (1982), 'Roxy's Music' by Johannes Delmeré jr. (1985).
2 'The Chosen One'.
3 'Boys and Girls'.
4 'Windswept'.
5 After 'These Foolish Things', 'Another Time Another Place', 'Let's Stick Together', 'In Your Mind', 'The Bride Stripped Bare'.
6 For example Neil Hubbard, Neil Jason, Jimmy Maelen, Andy Newmark, to name but four.

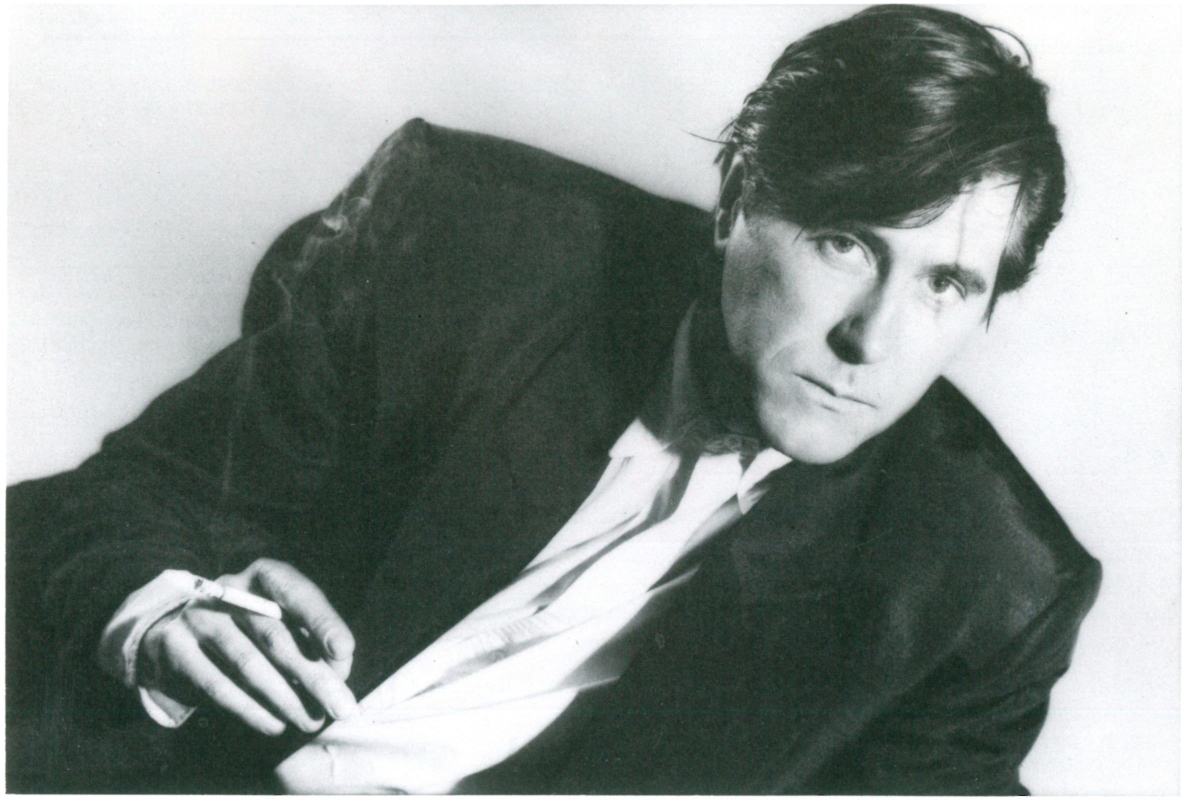
popular songs, the parts gather and gel into one organic aural fabric in which the non-essential is the nonsensical - so not there. It's fair to say that Ferry's true instrument is not his voice alone or the 'orchestra' but both. On 'Boys And Girls' those at various moments orchestrated into this enigmatic melting-pot include previous sidemen (Guy Fletcher on keyboards, Alan Spenner on bass, for instance), renowned players from further afield (like saxophonist David Sanborn and guitarist Nile Rodgers from the U.S., Mark Knopfler from Dire Straits, David Gilmour from Pink Floyd), and others not so famous but no less fine for that. Spotting who plays what where is another game to play.

'Avalon' was Roxy Music's greatest success and an appropriate culmination of their career. It achieved an elegiac perfection that seemed unsurpassable, and probably it was. But now Ferry has emulated 'Avalon's' textural richness and assured high-finish but given the music a wholly new thrust, eschewing the serenity and aura of nostalgia for a freshness and tension, a hard-edge of tough, urgent physicality: tranceability enhanced by danceability. The different emphasis and energy is reflected by the change in album-titles, the romantic far-off legend of Avalon giving way to the romantic tangible reality of boys and girls - although it also refers to a particular track, the phrase embraces with simple directness the key aspect of a universal theme, a theme which underlies virtually every song Ferry's ever written.

We're all of us, variously, boys and girls. Kids play at being grown-ups, until they're grown up themselves. Then they immediately start playing at being boys and girls: because in a world where we discover, with adult eyes, that nothing is very certain and all absolutes blur, one distinction - previously unappreciated - becomes crystal-clear and all-important, namely that between the sexes. And that distinction remains the most significant, and probably the only sure one, for the rest of our lives. It becomes the measure of our success or failure, the root of our hopes and fears, the scource of our greatest happiness and our worst sickness - a never-ending problem, a never-ending solution. It's an obsession which affects every other thread of our existence, yet it's irrational and uncontrollable, defying logic and common-sense. It brings both magic and misery, true meaning yet utter mystery. Love, even while it stares us in the face, is never simple, cut-and-dried and what it seems. It's elusive and illusive, concealing itself in a thousand maddening, myriad forms.

And so men and women go through life indulging in the strange and tortuous game of romance, with its spoken, unspoken and contradictory rules, its looks and gestures and forms of words, its litanies of desire and deceit and despair - reaching for the truth within, but only discovering, with each new glimpse, that it's different every time: just as to see a sculpture completely is to see it change with every new angle of view. We go round in circles forever, knowing less by knowing more. If "the truth is all that matters",[1] it's nevertheless a truth which has no single expression.

1 'Don't Stop The Dance'.



The lyrics of 'Boys And Girls' powerfully mirror this confused reality. Round and round we go, encountering more and understanding less. As the world turns, so the disc, each song confronting romantic experience from another angle, casting it in a new light (and shade): as a melancholy but inescapable dance, as the faintest sensual frisson, as an overwhelming elemental current, as an exotic battle-scarred town.[1] Of course love, or the lack of it, has always been rock'n'roll's most enduring topic, if not its raison d'être. But Bryan Ferry, by offering not the facile banalities of the average pop lyric but rather an acute portrayal of the complexities of emotion, mood and circumstance, has brought to the theme fresh substance - he is a master of the modern love-song. From the brash confidence of 'Street-Life' through the mellow angst of 'A Song For Europe' to the dangerous commitment of 'The Thrill Of It All' he has defined the aspirations of his generation with an unmatched sense of contemporaneity and exceptional use of musical, visual and verbal imagery. As the new songs make clear, the oft-touted view of Ferry as a sort of guru of gloom - purveyor of exquisitely refined sorrow, sense of loss, hopelessness, exemplar of hard-won ennui - is quite false. The dark side is always there, because to pretend otherwise would be gross deception, and selfdeception. But the main notion of 'Boys And Girls', constantly affirmed, is the need to recognise, resist and - most crucially - rise above the surrounding quagmires, pitfalls and mirages, never to give in but always to believe in and keep looking for life and love, however impenetrable and impossible everything seems.

There is no attempt at 'the whole truth' - an all-too-familiar presumption. Ferry's concise, oblique pen-sketches actually get closer to how-it-is, vividly capture diverse emotional landscapes: often hazardous terrains of shifting ground, ambiguous contours, seismic faults. Together they picture a world where contradiction reigns supreme, where high and low, black and white don't merge into a grey level but exist simultaneously, are even one and the same: there's no heaven without hell. It's "a world of pleasure and danger" where "words of passion" can also be words "of sorrow",[2] where "half a man is twice as much",[3] where "all the good has turned to bad"[4] and the "only friend" is a "stranger".[5] Paradox rampant... The price of love is precisely this vision of things gone awry, the devaluation of all else. "Lovers learn to suffer"[2] - learn that they know only that they don't know. They don't even know if their reactions are "a feeling only/or a state of mind".[6] They do know, or they find out soon enough, that love means risking everything. Forget past and future: "as love walks by" there's "no time to dream" of what might be, "no time to sigh"[4] over what might have been. And health and wealth: "you've got to know/how the strong get weak/and the rich get poor".[7] Lovers' wants are "dreams that money cannot offer". "Gold and silver" may "walk the main street" but the "shadow"[2] of love is - another paradox - a stronger reality, undermining the claims of both science and imagination: we're too young to reason/too grown up to dream".[7] Love is both ageless and of every age. Most nonsensical, and devastating, of all, to be in love is to be alone (the only side you're on is your own). That's why a stranger's one's only friend, why Ferry can sing "I'm a stranger in your town/that's the place

I belong" and, face to face with desolation, "death is the friend I've yet to meet."[4]

Despite this "there's no escape",[7] because in the end - and perhaps from the start - "love is all that matters".[8] We can't help but pursue our hearts' desires. Otherwise, "with love gone",[9] we're merely "drifting through a world that's torn and tattered",[8] an endless "waste land" that's equally a claustrophobic "ghetto",[9] littered only with the mocking edifices (as illusive as the studio sets and celluloid that generated them) of contemporary tragic myth, "a river of no return", "another heartbreak hotel":[5] an emotional sargasso.

The only solution is to keep on playing the game, to the hilt, "night and morning",[2] to lay oneself "on the line",[3] forcing oneself to extremes, "from heatwave to nightshade",[6] from "April fever"[2] to the gentlest "spring",[7] pitting all one's vitality against the lassitude and pessimism that'll otherwise pull one down - never accepting less than what one wants, forever putting "the burning question".[3] Ferry says it all in one line: "got to keep on moving or I'll die". That conviction - that by our own determination and unflagging energy we can find love and defeat the forces of misery, and must do so - sets the tenor of the whole album. It's a sentiment strikingly elaborated, and firmly expressing a *joie de vivre* over one *de mourir,* in a verse from 'Slave To Love':

> you're running with me
> don't touch the ground
> we're the restless hearted
> not the chained and bound.

1 'Don't Stop The Dance', 'Sensation', 'Windswept', 'Boys And Girls'.
2 'The Chosen One'.
3 'Valentine'.
4 'Boys And Girls'.
5 'Stone Woman'.
6 'Windswept'.
7 'Slave To Love'.
8 'Don't Stop The Dance'.
9 'A Waste Land'.

Men and women can't live "in a world of their own".[1] We have to venture forth even if "the storm is breaking". If breaking it is, for "so it seems"[2] only: nothing, but nothing - except that there are boys and there are girls, is ever certain. We never quite reach the heart of the matter. But maybe Bryan Ferry, this time around, gets close. And going around and around as we do, always on the "outside looking in",[1] maybe we too get a glimpse, albeit a sidelong glance and even though the glimpse is fleeting and sends us back to GO again - which it undoubtedly will. You can carry on playing 'Boys And Girls' over and over. Why not go in for it? Instructions shouldn't be necessary. A sense of fun is: after all, it's nothing but a game (to play). Are you a contestant?

In case instructions *are* necessary -

HOW TO ENTER

First, you're on the *outside looking in.* What you see before you is the album cover. Don't be taken in, the problems start right here. Is it the front or the back you gaze upon? Turn over sideways and you're upside down; turn over head-to-tail, i.e. turn it upside down, and you end up right, or upright. It works in reverse too. Perhaps the back cover is always the wrong way round, but you can't tell until you've found the front. It doesn't seem right? You've got no sense of fun. Which side *are* you on? You're on your own. As is Bryan Ferry in the picture. His glance, it may strike you, is sidelong, but what does it mean? Is it ironic, laconic, sardonic or Byronic? It'd be black-and-white if it wasn't tinted a rarified green.

When eventually you flip (to the other side) the intrigue is doubled. There, in deep colour, are a boy and a girl: the distinction - the only certain one you'll ever make - is clear. But what goes on? Is she waking or sleeping, interror or torpor, seductress or victim? Does blood yet pulse through that fabulous neck - surely fabulous, though sunk in darkness? Is his extreme concern that of murderer or messiah, poisoner or prince, her nemesis or genesis? Faced with this frozen moment of high drama, denied its prelude and outcome, you can only guess - speculation intensified by the overwrought opulence of light and shade worthy of Caravaggio. The picture's lush, almost lurid, suggestibility foreshadows the songs themselves, their expression of a contradictory, impossibly juxtaposed world where pain and pleasure, threat and thrill, danger and desire aren't stirred to an oblivious monotone - a grey level - but are shaken - glancing off one another, sidelong - in a dynamic, glinting cocktail, the jangle of true experience.

Now move closer in, to the inner sleeve. On one side, beneath the album credits, the boy and girl are closer as well. On the other they're so close up that a magnified patch of skin forms a background grid for the lyrics. "Beauty," as one of Ferry's lines here claims, "should be deeper than the skin."[3] These are lyrics which quite pointedly probe beneath the surface.

Finally, slipping off the inner sleeve - gently and slowly, like the last part of undressing a stranger - you come to the disc itself. The only way further in is to spin it, and let the needle or the laser glide - another sidelong glance - from edge to epicentre, over and over...

HOW TO FINISH

there is no end to the great unknown[1]

[1] 'Valentine'.
[2] 'Slave To Love'.
[3] 'Don't Stop The Dance'.

'SLAVE TO LOVE' VIDEO

BY LUCAS ESION

It's almost impossible nowadays to release a single and not make a promotional video as well. Television exposure can help sell a lot of records, but obviously a record won't get played without a visual accompaniment. In the last few years videos have got better and better, stylistically and technically, so that it's become increasingly difficult to produce one which looks new and different. In an attempt to be original bands have spent more and more money on them - often more than the records themselves cost!

Bryan made videos to his music from the very beginning: he may well have been the first to use the medium. Although it was still an untested, experimental technique in 1972, the newly-formed Roxy Music were filmed on video by students at the Royal College Of Art in London performing 'Re-make Re-model' (from the first album). It still looks good now: frenzied colours and cuts matching the intense, thrusting character of the track. From start to finish it took maybe two hours.
The following year it took all of a day to complete filming two tracks from 'These Foolish Things', Bryan's first solo album. In 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' Bryan, clad in denim, sits thumping a grand piano and fiercely chanting the song right into camera. In the title-track he leans on the piano, attired now in white dinner jacket, while photographer Eric Boman, got-up and blacked-up as Shirley Bassey, vamps at the ivories. In fact the 'Hard Rain' film may have been the first example of video's selling-power - it was shown in Australia and the song went to no. 1. In general, however, these early videos were hardly shown because TV wasn't geared to their showing as TV hadn't realised their potential and had no outlets for them. As in most things, Bryan was too far ahead of his time.
Strangely enough most of these early films were for Bryan's solo singles rather than for Roxy's output. Notable were 'The Price Of Love', 'You Go To My Head', 'Let's Stick Together' and 'What Goes On' for their originality and technical virtuosity. Taken together they form a fascinating record of Bryan's pioneering visual talent. And the high quality is maintained in the subsequent videos of Roxy Music singles like 'Angel Eyes' and 'Avalon'.

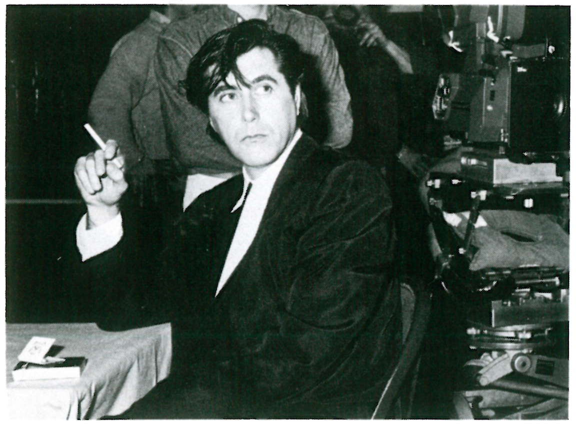
In 1985 a video is *de rigeur.* So when it was decided to release 'Slave To Love' as the first single from the 'Boys And Girls' album the question which immediately loomed was: what about the video? Specifically, who could be found to direct it? Whose work was genuinely inventive and accomplished enough to create a film to match the music and - like the music - be unlike anything else around? After viewing countless sample tapes, Bryan was suddenly impressed by a Frenchman, Jean-Baptiste Mondino. Mondino hadn't done a great deal, but what he had done - a few TV commercials and a video for Don Henley - had great style and individuality. So he was hired.

Bryan outlined his ideas and waited for Mondino to return with a detailed shooting-script. The video was to be shot in Paris, and required several locations and numerous characters. But there wasn't much time - the single was to be released in three weeks. So casting took place right away, for three beautiful girls, a half-dozen authentic-looking paparazzi, and a child. A nightclub, hotel and villa were rented, along with an aeroplane and limousine. Finally Bryan flew to France for five day's filming.

On the set with Mondino

To make it especially striking there were two surprise elements in the 'story'. The greater part of the vocal, until the last verse, would be sung by the girls (one after the other) rather than by Bryan. And Bryan is enslaved not by passion for one of the girls, as one is led to expect through most of the video, but by adoration of a child - presumably, within the fictional framework, his own; that this is actually the true object of his love is only revealed at the very end, at the same moment that he is seen to sing for the first time.

The underlying narrative of the video is as follows: News photographers are waiting for a plane to land. The plane, carrying Bryan, arrives, and he makes for a waiting limousine, ignoring the pursuing paparazzi and their persistent clicking of shutters. Bryan's thoughts are clearly elsewhere, perhaps on one of the three girls who seem similarly distracted, waiting for something, as they sing along to 'Slave To Love', each in their own apartment. Meanwhile Bryan - still with photographers in tow - gazes from the limousine as two lovers kiss in an adjacent car, sits in a club as another couple sway passionately on the dance-floor. Finally Bryan reaches his destination; for the first time we see him sing, as he sits on the end of a bed in a dimly-lit room, the song clearly meant for whoever is lying there. The paparazzi, who have trailed him all this way, in the hope of the ultimate scoop - the star together with his loved one - are suddenly embarrassed at intruding, and creep quietly away. It seems that they've witnessed a scene far too private and serious, no cheap flirtation. Now Bryan lifts the blonde-haired figure from the bed, into his arms: it's a young child, obviously his daughter. The phrase 'slave to love' takes on a new, special, unexpected meaning. Father and daughter hug one another, oblivious to the world outside - the photographers aimlessly kicking pebbles in the street, the model-girl endlessly twirling in her unchanging pose.



Of course this story is not told on film as crudely as the above description suggests. The events are intercut in a fast, complex manner, so that the result is an exciting melange of imagery which functions as a powerful visual experience beyond the mere storyline. Bryan returned to Paris to help Mondino with the editing, which not surprisingly took two days. One interesting point: to achieve the best technical quality and the most subtle colour and tone, 'Slave To Love' was shot on 35mm. film and only transferred to videotape afterwards. Mondino, it appears, is as much a perfectionist in his work as Bryan himself.

BRYAN AT LIVE-AID

BY RICHARD BLAINE

Live-Aid, the biggest rock event the world has ever seen; 72,000 people at Wembley, 100,000 in Philadelphia and - through 16 satelites - an estimated TV audience of more than a billion in 143 countries.

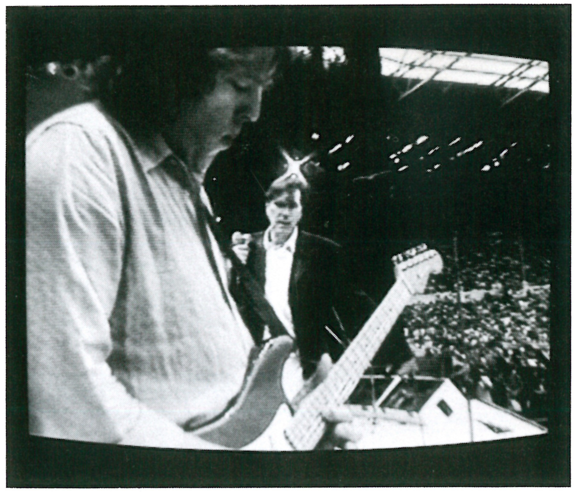
Bryan got a fabulous reaction from the crowd when he came on for his first performance on the British stage since almost three years.

Backed-up by a 10 piece all-star band - all players on the album, he started his set with 'Sensation' followed by 'Boys And Girls' and 'Slave To Love', all of the new album, to end with a brilliant performance of 'Jealous Guy', his gorgeous tribute to John Lennon.

Bryan's performance at Wembley was one of the highlights and a promise for a possible tour. (?)

Line-up of the band:

David Gilmour	guitar
Neil Hubbard	guitar
Chester Kamen	guitar
Jimmy Maelen	percussion
Andy Newmark	drums
Marcus Miller	bass
Jon Carin	keyboards
Michelle Cobbs	vocals
Ednah Holt	vocals
Fonzi Thornton	vocals



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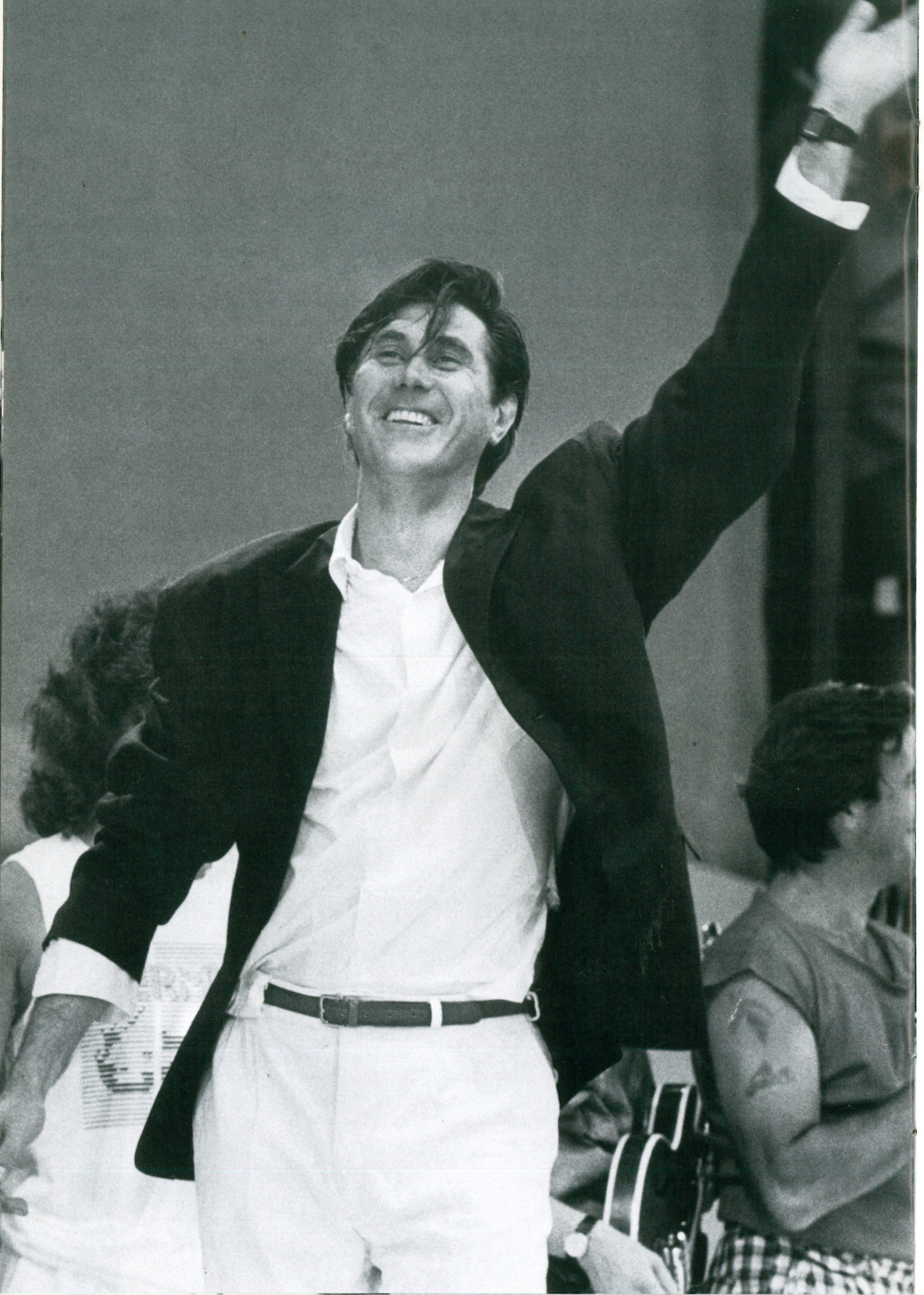


NEW YORK REVIEWS

New York Times, July 10, 1985

THE POP LIFE

BY ROBERT PALMER

Bryan Ferry, who spent 10 years as lead vocalist and chief songwriter for the innovative British band Roxy Music and is now enjoying a successful solo career, spent some 18 months making 'Boys And Girls', his new Warner Brothers album. So it wasn't really surprising to hear him say the other day, "You just have to try and live a life in between records, and the records are a response to that." The idea that other people make records during temporary hiatuses from living their lives doesn't seem to have occurred to him.

Some pop auteurs have spent years making a single album; Mr. Ferry's 18 months is lengthy but hardly unprecedented. But most albums that were more than a year in the making leave the listener wondering what could have taken so long; either they're overblown, or they sound as if they've been puréed somewhere along the way. 'Boys And Girls' is a rarity, as well as one of the year's best pop albums, because it sounds as if every minute put into its making was well spent.

Mr. Ferry's distincitve crooning - one could think of him as rock's Bing Crosby - and his songs of romantic obsession often sound simple on the surface and open, even spacious, texturally. But more careful listening to the new album reveals layer upon layer of music and meaning. The first song, 'Sensation', begins with a brief snippet of a symphony orchestra tuning up and then brings in its components one at a time. A rhythm guitar begins chattering on the left, only to be counterpointed by another rhythm guitar figure on the right. There's a moody swirl of keyboards and then a whole new layer, with more rhythm and lead guitar, keyboards and voices, is added on top. All of this happens before Mr. Ferry sings a note. Although he has been alternating 'solo albums' and Roxy Music disks for a decade now, Mr. Ferry has put his personal stamp on the music - as well as on the lyrics and vocal stylings - on every record he's made. This reduces the announcement that Roxy Music has now permanently disbanded to an afterthought. The last Roxy Music album, the much-admired 'Avalon' was as much a Bryan Ferry album as 'Boys And Girls'.

"I start with mood and atmosphere, maybe just a keyboard part, and go from there," he explained. "On this album, I ended up using about 30 inspirational players, many of whom - Nile Rodgers, David Sanborn, Mark Knopfler from Dire Straits - are solo artists themselves. The idea was that they should play themselves while bending toward my moods. It's a process of trial and error, and it takes time. On this record I was experimenting a lot; getting the lyrics, the singing and the mood of the music to match wasn't easy. And of course, the hideous writer's block appeared a couple of times. 'Avalon' was an album a lot of people liked, and I had a sort of fear when I started work on the new album: I was determined not to let it become a sort of 'Avalon Part Two'. I *have* found that when you've put yourself through it like that, the next two albums or so will come that much easier."

'Boys And Girls' has a strong, almost hypnotic flow, but it's evident that it didn't come easily. The music opposes clarity with opacity, airy textures with deliberately constricted ones, and the lyrics ricochet off these instrumental mood-paintings, often in ingenious ways. A song like 'The Chosen One' could be a street scene on upper Fifth Avenue, a rejected lover walking oblivious to his surroundings, aching for "dreams that money cannot offer". But the musical and vocal textures, which keep changing, like the shadows of high, wind-driven clouds passing across a landscape, open the song up, giving it a sense of eternity. The mood it evokes so effectively has a timeless dimension, is part of a recurring cycle - the song's observations could have been made yesterday or a hundred years ago.
The sinuous musical setting of 'Windswept' works like a photo enlarger on the lyric's highly charged erotic imagery, blowing up pictures of a curved arm or a single droplet of sweat to near-billboard size, as in the similarly lush and surreal 'Myths of the Near Future' by the British novelist J.G. Ballard. And there is a connection here. Mr. Ballard is a chronicler of obsessions, a man who finds himself spellbound by a handful of images, many of them quite ordinary by themselves, and then examines and distorts these images in every conceivable way. Mr. Ferry is another British romantic who can, as 'Windswept' indicates, feel "swept away" by something as elusive as "a low whisper windswept in the air." However concerned with the pursuit of pleasure his songs may seem, his real interests are the underlying obsessions, the payoff and the price.

When asked how he would characterize the overall mood of his new album, Mr. Ferry quickly said, "Well, I hope it's not *too* gloomy." He stopped for a minute, then added: "It's got to the stage where I seem to be digging deeper and deeper within myself every time I make a record. And when I sort of *plunge* for things, I do find some sad moods. The point is to try and make something beautiful out of that."

BRYAN FERRY'S SOUL MANIFESTO

BY BARRY WALTERS

Village Voice, July 16, 1985

Once, during a clumsy early attempt at a relationship, my most ill-suited partner in crime took me to a lesbian shrink. After asking a few devastating questions, she delivered the diagnosis that my grandiose romantic expectations were determined by magazine advertisements. I realized the real truth upon my recovery from shellshock: not ads, but an adolescence steeped in Roxy Music was to blame.

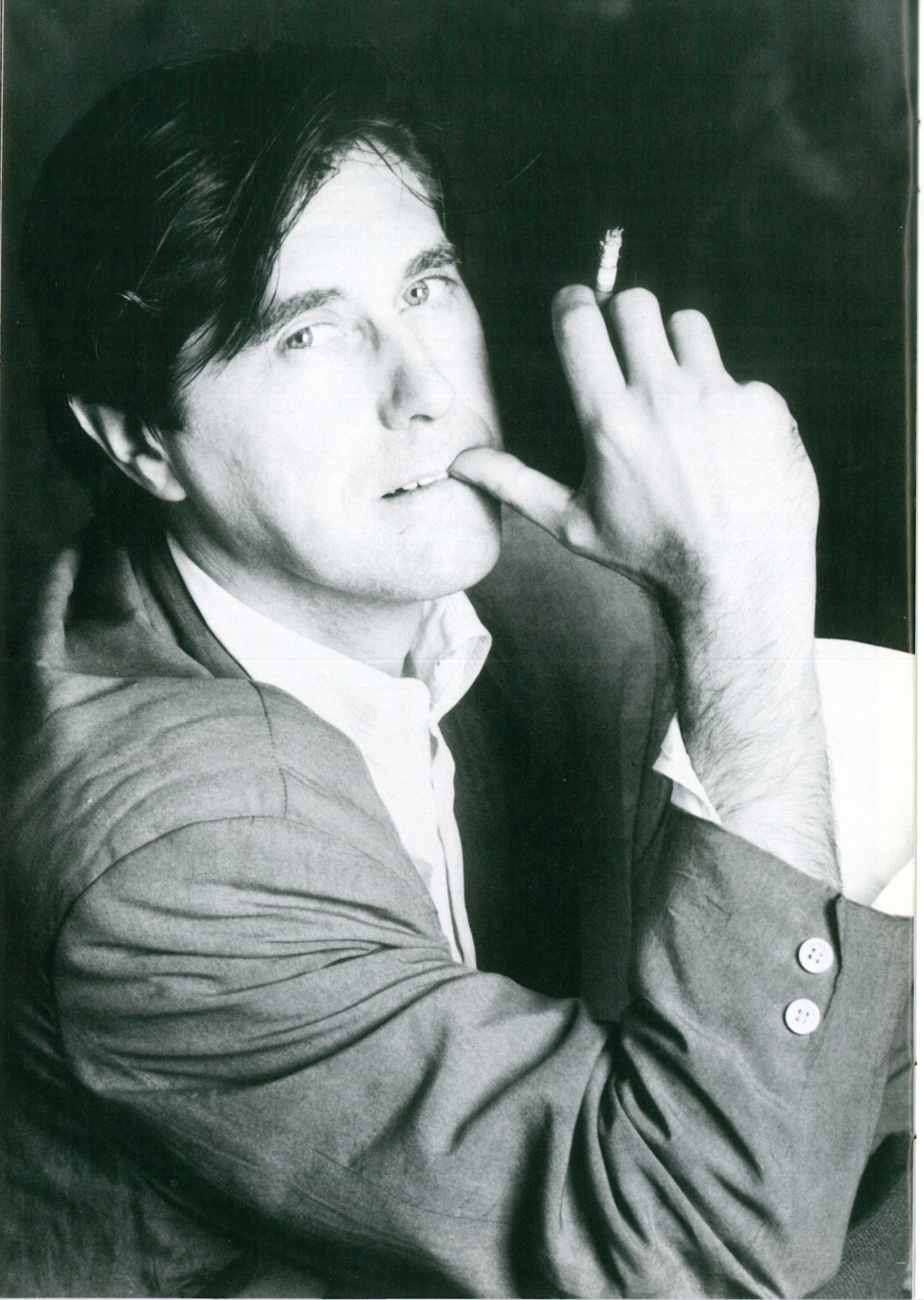
I suppose I would have become a better-adjusted teenager if I could have stayed in the living room with my mother listening to Barry White rather than barricading myself in my bedroom with import copies of 'Stranded' and 'Here Come The Warm Jets'. Roxy's early eccentric glamor, silly passion, and weird noises all held me captivated, but it was years later before I was old enough to understand a single tortured thing that once-warbling voice had to say about love. Then with 'Siren', something clicked in my small-town-boy mind: "Love is the drug and I need to score". For years I didn't know how or with what. But on the night I attended my first rock concert, escorted by my high school's wrestling coach to assuage my mother's fears that I was going to be exposed to all sorts of nasty influences. I think I glimpsed the posibilities while watching Bryan Ferry's hips. Little did she know. Little did I know that almost 10 years and as many albums later. I would be listening to Ferry sing, "Oh baby, do it again and again" - just like Barry White.
Make no mistake: although it boasts guitarists from Dire Floyd, 'Boys And Girls' is no rock LP. Instead, it's the soul record Ferry's been dying to remake/remodel all his life. And it's a killer.
But it's a killer only if you give it enough time to slay you. Every Roxy 'reunion' record has been a sleeper - initially hard to warm up to, but later incredibly cherishable - and Ferry's first since the final split is no exception. Rather than resume his career by breaking from Roxy's past or investigating his roots as on previous solo LPs, on 'Boys And Girls' Ferry culminates 'Avalon's languid groove by lending it a more assertive dance-floor attack.

For better and for worse, Roxy's high-society sound and vision has ostensibly tailored much of the British pop currently adorning our charts. But perhaps Roxy's most covert influence has been on Chic. Both Nile Rodgers's conceptual suss and Tony Thompson's battery snap were indebted to Roxy, and with his unmistakable bowie-knife guitar slash into 'Boys And Girls's opening cut. 'Sensation', Rodgers pays back the loan. As on 'Avalon' and the final Roxy tours, most of the Chic singers reappear, but here they're prominently mixed to deliver a brashly spirited counterpoint to Ferry's gentler-than-ever sighs.
His jukebox-in-heaven hooks have likewise become unprecedentedly sedate, and Ferry's distilled his formidable ability for conventional verse-chorus-verse pop song structure into instrumental grooves pulsating with vocal catch phrases. Marrying minimal form to maximum production values is a trick that has

tempted many, but that few have managed. Yet here Ferry does it as adroitly as the funkmasters he's been shyly alluding to for over a decade. Nowhere is this more effective than on 'The Chosen One', where a momentary chord change on the title incantation resounds like a revelation.

Ferry takes his less-is-sometimes-more strategy to his lyrics as well, and 'Sensation' showcases perhaps his most economical word play to date. Many British critics have complained about 'Slave To Love''s self-parody but I think that, as usual, they haven't listened close enough. The song begins with Ferry's familiar dour despair: "To need a woman/You've got to know/How the strong get weak/And the rich get poor." To be sure, this is a pretty jaded attitude, but what makes the lyrics and their translation onto video work is how both ultimately achieve an endearing optimism tempered by adulthood. Directed by Jean Baptiste Mondino, who pulled off the near-impossible task of making Don Hedley visually captivating for 'The Boys Of Summer', the 'Slave To Love' video reinterprets key scenes from Fellini's 'La Dolce Vita' with a significant alteration. Cast as coveted star as well as wistful voyeur, Ferry is hounded by both photographers and his guilty conscience, and although any other pop star would look maudlin delivering a love song to a sleeping child, Ferry's persona and iconography is so strikingly similar to Marcello Mastroianni's that the video's irony makes the song haunting, rather than the usual case of the video haunting the song.

Whereas rock revels in youth's naive thrill of it all, the best black music often testifies to the tribulations of hard-earned experience. Upscale soul suits Ferry's maturity, and 'Boys And Girls's spiritual and sonic resonance shares a great deal more with recent Luther Vandross than merely Vandross's bass player and collaborator, Marcus Miller. After 13 years, Ferry can still teach his technopop offspring a few antitrend tricks. However, the current vogue for trashing anything stylish, synthesized, Anglo-Saxon, and - heaven forbid - sensitive, and copping a we-are-the-world-except-England attitude, does not wash at all well with me, because figures like Bryan Ferry provided my youth with an alternative to the Eagles just like Hüsker Dü now provide an alternative to Howard Jones. Sure, Ferry's become quite a posh guy, but he's used his status to achieve a trans-Atlantic sound that obscures citizenship, rather than rubbing you in the face with it. It's unfashionable, but to me that's smart.



PAINTED WORDS, TAINTED LOVE

BY JAMES TRUMAN

Great pop records do more than define the present; they lay a minefield around pop's future. Hesitancy to follow can leave a career mired in the past, forever backdated. Being too quick to follow suit invites a barrage of criticism: obvious, predictable and hopelessly unoriginal, for starters. The most immediately interesting thing about Bryan Ferry is that he makes great pop records. Secondly, after 13 years in the field, as both solo artist and leader of Roxy Music, he has never been called obvious, predictable or unoriginal.

When he first launched the group early in 1972, Roxy Music came through as a brilliantly conceived, genuinely original new-age sensation - which like all new-age sensations, and especially British new-age sensations, seemed destined to flourish and fade with the cycle of fashion it set in motion. But Roxy Music lasted; it was built to last. Reaching beyond their inspired-amateur beginnings, they got even better. In the process, they quickly jumped from being a contender to becoming the competition - something hard to get past without looking at, referring to, borrowing from. Although the group's first records didn't make much impact in America, their influence clearly did. Elegantly played out in early Talking Heads, brazenly pilfered by The Cars, it still rebounds through the work of a whole bunch of other minor-leaguers. And as for Britain - well, one might take a roll call, working backwards from Duran Duran, an efficient if rather vacuous junior high version of mid-period Roxy.
Whether Ferry takes this as flattery or rude insolence (and he'll go with either, depending on the weather) isn't the point. The point is that Roxy Music progressed, and stayed interesting, by expanding their early work rather than by reacting to new market trends, as Bowie did. This may be a tribute to Ferry's vision, but it has made things complicated, hard to read. In fact, complicated in stereo: From one channel, richocheting back and forth in perfect time warp, there's been a steady stream of Roxy soundalikes, a persistent overture to a familiar refrain; from the other channel, the real thing, also throwing out echoes of another time and place. It's still a Roxy world out there.

An even greater problem, however was that, even at the beginning, it was hard to grasp exactly what Roxy Music actually was. No one could claim that Bryan Ferry invented rock, or for that matter art-rock, avant-pop or new-age blues and balladry. Nor was he the first pop entertainer to understand irony, camp or nostalgia. The vocabulary already existed. However, by rearranging the syntax he succeeded in broadening its scope, and he drastically reshaped its meaning. With one ear turned to rock and blues, the other to the avant-garde, and with both eyes tracking the giant sprawl of twentieth-century popular culture, Ferry's songwriting brilliantly played one off against the other. The swirling, atonal drone of 'In Every Dream Home a Heartache,' a love song sung to an inflatable sex doll, lent the lyrics a grim foreboding even as it shaded them with irony. '2.H.B.,' a blue mood framed by cocktail lounge piano, paid a campy tribute to Humphrey Bogart at the very same time as it choked on the sob in Ferry's throat. You could go on: to the rock 'n' roll love song which made the girl's car number plate into its chorus, to Ferry crooning a smoke-curled lyric while the band veered off in the direction of the Shirelles... at a time when the consensus idea of art-rock lay in schlock versions of nineteenth century classical music, here was strange stuff indeed. That Ferry made it all sound straightforward and sincere put him beyond strange: probably a genius, possibly a madman... an enigma at least.

"Perhaps a natural oddball," he suggests, from the far corner of the room, to which he has temporarily retired. One quickly learns that the next hardest thing to pinning Ferry down to do an interview is pinning him down while actually doing the interview. Surprisingly shy, scrupulously polite, he fields questions by nervously pacing up and down the floor, as though he'd mislaid the answers and was feverishly searching for them. If the walls were to evaporate, you'd sense that he'd quite happily disappear, too.
His last interview, on British television last year, settled this beyond question. Stipulating that it take place on a favorite beach, close to his old hometown, Ferry began at a slow amble, progressed to a brisker stroll with each question, and, by the end, had interviewer, cameraman and sound crew jogging at his heels as he took off into an approaching North Sea mist - which suggests at least a slightly eccentric sense of humor.
"Actually, I just don't enjoy interviews," he says. "The whole thing of talking about my work has always made me feel uneasy or embarrassed, as if I didn't want to talk about it with myself, never mind anyone else. It's perhaps just an old-fashioned romantic notion of inspiration coming from somewhere I don't really understand, and being superstitious about trying to analyze it."

An analysis of the oddball might easily begin in Newcastle, an industrial city in the north of England, where, in 1945, Bryan Ferry was born. Although poor, his parents stressed education and after high school helped him into art college. In that, he was superficially no different from thousands of others; British art colleges being a kind of traditional safety net for working-class teenagers. To many, they've been a means of access into fashion and music; to many, many more, they offer the only possible creative interlude between high school and a career as a truck driver. But, Ferry was serious about becoming an artist, and the college he attended was actually the Fine Art Department of Newcastle University, headed by Richard Hamilton, then Britain's foremost avant-garde artist. He was also serious about American R&B and soul music, even fronting a

couple of local, part-time pub bands who knocked out cover versions of Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding. "At that stage it was just a matter of wanting to make my mark somehow, of feeling that I had some kind of talent to offer," he says, passing by the tape recorder on another lap of the room. "Having started thinking that it would be as a painter, it took several years, in my usual roundabout, dreamy kind of way, to transfer that to being a musician." It also took a move to London where, among other things, Ferry supported himself by teaching art to a class of teenage girls. His method was to bring a record player, crank up the Motown, and let them get on with it.

On the lookout for musicians to help him perform the songs he'd begun writing, he met a classically trained oboist-turned-rock-saxophonist by the name of Andy Mackay, who in turn introduced him to an old college friend, a dedicated non-musician with an interest in electronics and a passport to prove he really was called Brian Peter George St. John le Baptiste de la Salle Eno. Somewhere along the line they also recruited guitarist Phil Manzanera and drummer Paul Thompson. They already had a bass player who, like all Roxy Music bass players, didn't last long. Around the peripheries, other figures appeared: Antony Price, a young, wonderfully innovative London fashion designer; Mark Fenwick, heir to a chain of British department stores and a partner in a go-ahead new management company called E.G.; and publicist Simon Puxley, an eccentrically brilliant Ph.D. whose press releases, at their best, were absolutely incomprehensible. Which is to say there was a concept of sorts: an experimental rock group, dressed to kill, backed up by sound business sense and prone to third-degree eccentricity.
Canny enough to recognize the band's weakness - performing - Mark Fenwick kept their early appearances low-key, waiting till they put out a record before launching them in earnest.
The ploy worked, because the record was terrific. First released in June 1972, 'Roxy Music' is still a revelation - an extraordinary synthesis of fractured rock 'n' roll and wild experimentation. Like the early Velvet Underground, which it occasionally recalled, the sophistication of ideas transcended their sometimes-shaky execution. At the same time the cleverness of Roxy's presentation not only transcended rock-biz hype, but subtly reversed its rules. Rather than use image as packaging, they made it a central part of the content, a celebration of its meaning. And those *outfits*! Post-dated Fifties Rocker in '72, Glam Smoothie in '73, White Tuxedoed Crooner in '74, Pampas Cowboy alternating with American G.I. in '75 - together a shopping list of early '70s style, which Ferry either took so seriously he had to be joking, or so light-heartedly he could only be serious. Ambivalence was always part of the picture.
So, too, was the curious, double-edged irony of Roxy Music, which on the one hand seemed intent on distancing itself from it's subject matter, as if placing everything in quotation marks, while on the other hand making clear that it all *really mattered*. And even when it didn't matter it mattered, so to speak.

There's a popular story about a young art student who, asked to write about an important work of contemporary art, produced a thesis on Bryan Ferry. (We're not sure if he passed, but he changed his name to Adam Ant and did OK anyway.) The point being that the British obsession with style, interpreted by foreigners as a decadent silliness, is, to the British, a very serious business. There are at least two good reasons for this. Firstly, style is one of the few things the British are still good at; and secondly, it is one of the very few things which can, even temporarily, lift the barriers of class. In a society as rigidly class-bound as Britain, style is an important weapon, almost a political act. To look better, to dress sharper, than the ruling class is the only way to gate-crash a party to which one would rarely, if ever, be properly invited. From the Teddy Boys in the '50s to Mods in the '60s, this impulse has been a primary force behind British youth culture. In that respect, the strongest memory of Roxy's early audience doesn't revolve around the celebrity art crowd, the professional hipsters, the international thrill-seekers; it consists of the many more provincial working-class teenagers who, within days of a Roxy tour kicking off, had perfectly duplicated the New Look, parading it shamelessly, in celebration not just of Ferry but of themselves.
"I always loved that," he enthuses, slowing down a trace. "That whole thing of glamorous lifestyles... it was something which had always attracted me as a boy. Not necessarily posh lifestyles, just things that were more interesting than where I came from. I resented so much the idea of being born into a certain caste and having to stay in that bracket forever. It became a very strong motive, to win that freedom of movement which would allow me to experience different kinds of life, to have the opportunity to change."

Along with David Bowie, Roxy Music institutionalized the idea of audience-as-star, even if their methods and motives were subtly different. Where Ferry, beneath the playfulness, embraced role-playing as though his life depended on it, Bowie changed persona as his career demanded it - to spruce up each new chapter of his work-in-progress. The difference was perhaps less apparent in Europe, where the two have always run neck-and-neck, than in America, where the heavy-metal-pop-plus-makeup of Ziggy Stardust - an astute combination of the commercial and the controversial - quickly realized Bowie's stadium-sized ambitions. Roxy Music, meanwhile, were playing bottom-of-the-bill to Jethro Tull. "There were just no compatible acts in America to package them with," recalls Mark Fenwick. "The tour was a disaster. The record industry didn't know what to make of the group, and with a couple of exceptions (notably Cleveland's WMMS) radio wouldn't touch us." It would take another three years, and the Top 30 success of "Love Is The Drug," before Roxy broke through in any substantial way.

As for the Bowie issue, Ferry is evasive, thinks it bad form to discuss it. All the same, it's not hard to see that he's less impressed with Bowie's music than with his sales figures, and wouldn't lose sleep if those took a nosedive. Neither is it hard to figure out that Bowie's interest runs the other way. In 1973, shortly after Ferry announced plans for 'These Foolish Things,' an album of arch cover versions of his favorite oldies, Bowie packed his bags for Paris, made a record in two weeks, and rush-released it on his return. The result was 'Pin-ups'... an album of his favorite oldies.
"He phoned me up one day to tell me he'd finished it," Ferry recalls. "I'm not sure what he expected me to say. I think I said 'Oh.' "

Since then they haven't exactly been tennis partners, although Bowie periodically crosses the gap by quizzing Ferry's friends on his future plans and, hitting right below the belt, by using Ferry's tailor in London. Which might also explain why he approached Ferry to appear in his 'Jazzin' For Blue Jean' video - as the debonair smoothie who mocks the Bowie-character's attempt to turn himself into a lady-killer. The invitations wasn't taken too seriously. Bowie settled for using a Ferry lookalike.
For all that, there's no question that Bowie better anticipated the advent of punk rock in 1977. Just before it broke he moved to West Berlin, to live an ascetic life and make avowedly uncommercial art records with (irony!) Brian Eno. Credibility-wise this was unbeatable; it guaranteed him safe passage through the revolution.

Ferry couldn't have appeared more out of step if he'd planned it. Having disbanded Roxy Music the previous year ("I felt I had to grow up musically"), 1977 found him living in a famously expensive Swiss hotel and recording with a bunch of super-slick session musicians. At the same time, his name had become a fixture in British society gossip columns. Taken together, these three were as precise a contravention of The Spirit of '77 as was humanly possible. In actual fact, the gossip columns had been a nagging issue for several years, ever since Ferry had started to live out his theatrical interest in glamorous lifestyles in the real world. In fairness, he'd never promised that he wouldn't. But to those who thought they'd made the journey with him, only to find themselves stranded back in a duller world, it felt like a betrayal. And in 1977 it all rebounded badly. When the same gossip columns informed him and the rest of the interested world that his model girlfriend Jerry Hall had left him for Mick Jagger, Ferry began to appear not merely a snob, but a loser as well. The punks turned on him with a vengeance. Or, more exactly, with the vengeance of rebellious teenagers finally leaving home. Punk rock's emphasis on musical amateurism, on style (now messing up instead of dressing up) and on turning its audience into part of the show exhibited more than a few hereditary ties to early Roxy Music.

Ferry's Swiss record, 'The Bride Stripped Bare,' was a commercial disaster; not merely because the punks didn't like it - it was pretty nondescript anyway. Its failure - his first - hurt him badly. Punk, he says, didn't. "I think I vaguely enjoyed the fact that it was so different from what I was doing. I suppose had I been philosophical I might have rolled around in the grass tearing my hair out! *'Oh no!* Some new people have actually *made records!'* But I don't think I really minded at all. It was more difficult when later waves came along and my early style of music was resurrected. I could recognize people writing songs in the same way, using the same reference points and so forth. Sometimes you felt they were a little too clone-like, but that's the way it goes. Ultimately, it just made me more determined to be myself."
In late 1978, Ferry re-formed Roxy Music with Andy Mackay, Phil Manzanera and a soon-to-disappear Paul Thompson. It was no secret that, on a personal level, the group didn't especially like one another. It was no secret that the group hadn't much liked each other for years. Eno's sudden departure in 1973, after the 'For Your Pleasure' album, exposed the existence of rivalries, or at least different perceptions of democracy. While the others wanted equal partnership, Ferry saw the group as a vehicle for his ideas, which was how it had started and, in the event, continued. He also claims the squabbling was inspirational. "Being quite a competitive person, it always suited me tot be in that kind of situation, where I had other talents to fight, as it were. A lot of my best work came from that, the urge to improve upon something which someone else had played or suggested."
Over the next two years, the remodeled Roxy Music put out two big-selling albums, 'Manifesto' and 'Flesh And Blood'. Both offered beautifully played, immaculately crafted Roxy songs, picking up from where 'Siren', the last group album, had left off in 1975. But as a wandering sage was heard to remark, great pop records lay a minefield around the future. From a group which had once sold you not just a record, but an alternative-option lifestyle, there seemed to be a dimension missing. Specifically, the dimension of context: neither record displayed their former flair for seizing a moment so perfectly that it became exclusively theirs. Oddly enough, the next album overcame this problem by ignoring it completely. Rather than trying to repackage Roxy's early histeria, 'Avalon' refined it into a shimmering, hallucinatory stillness, floating free of time, place or fashion. Selling more than three million copies, it became their most successful album and, definitively, their last.
"When it was finished I knew there would never be another," says Ferry. "It nearly didn't get made at all. It just got to be too much agony, dealing with personality conflicts all the time. As I said, it used to be good for my work, but I thought it just got to the wrong side of being right. To keep it together just as a business name didn't seem a good enough reason."
Accordingly, he spent 18 months recording Avalon's sequel, flitting restlessly back and forth between London and New York. "It gets harder every time, in terms of finding that speed and energy of youth. It's something that's very difficult to explain, especially to younger people, because when you're young and you have that enthusiasm and ambition you don't ever imagine not having it. I still respect what I do as art, I'm afraid, which is why I wait so long for that genuine enthusiasm to come, otherwise the work wouldn't mean anything.

"Also, I really do want to sound different from other people, and from my previous work. Unfortunately, it means that you do spend 18 months making a record, because you think of an idea and then have to go beyond it, and then go beyond that until it gets to the point where you think you're happy with it. Then you think 'Have I gone too far?' I never reach the point where I think my records are completely perfect. Usually I just get exhausted and reluctantly let go of them, which is where a deadline helps." Only this time it didn't. Originally scheduled for release last November, the album got put back to January, and then April, by which time it lacked only a title and a final mix of one song, those problems were resolved and 'Boys And Girls' finally made it to the shops in June.

To make sense of this is to understand that indecision is Ferry's way of getting things done. The late-breaking, against-the-odds masterpiece of his post-Siren career, the new album extends a patchwork of eerie, fragile tensions: a music whose energy comes not from resolving contradictions, but from leaving them subtly unresolved.
Of course Ferry is inconsolable on the matter. It's 3 A.M. in his New York hotel room. There's an advance copy of Jerry Hall's forthcoming literary memoirs on the table. "I just wish Jerry wouldn't exaggerate so much," he sighs. There's also a new mix of a song playing on the sound system. Pacing up and down the room, he picks up on a detail he doesn't like. It's enough: he's off into one of his famously quixotic monologues which, typically, begins with a meditation on the small detail, spoken to no one in particular, blossoms into plans to junk the whole record and finishes in a decision to sell his house and worldly possessions and go live in a cottage on the beach.
Ferry is a hard character to define. Smart, funny, charming, animated when he's off-duty; morbid drifts of insecurity and self-doubt seem to occupy most of his working moments. On another day, in another context, I'd asked him if he thought it was disillusioning to live out one's fantasies.

"I think the corny thruth of the matter is that you find you can't buy happiness," he says. „When you're young you think 'I want to be rich and go on a yacht,' and then when you do you find you're still the same, still carrying around the same general luggage. I don't think your mind changes, and your heart certainly doesn't change. Having lived in various places, and having known various groups of people, I've found that I don't really fit in with any of them. It's a strange dawning, because you've always imagined that one day you're suddenly going to fit in somewhere and become a happy person. Not that I'm miserable or anything."

Perhaps the best way to make sense of this is to remember that through the years, the costume changes, the ups and downs of his carreer, Ferry has maintained at least one steady persona. It's that of the classic romantic, the hero as striver and sufferer, in a world where true love comes hand-in-hand with certáin betrayal, where every perfect evening ends up as a table for one, and where every victory has disaster built in.

Which would seem to explain a lot, except that these days Ferry's own personal life is less prone to disaster. When not working, he lives a quiet, deliberately low-key life in the British countryside with Lucy, his wife of three years, and two sons - Otis (after Redding) aged 2, and the other so new that his name has so far eluded even his parents. It appears a more cheerful and ordered existence than his writing would indicate.
"That's true," he grins. "But don't forget, I have a very good memory."

ALL STYLES SERVED HERE

BY RICHARD BLAINE

BRYAN FERRY SOLO

THESE FOOLISH THINGS — September, 1973

After finishing 'For Your Pleasure' in February '73 Bryan started working on his first solo album. 'These Foolish Things' was a perfect blend of songs mostly from the 'fifties and 'sixties though the title track dates from the 'thirties'. They were all pop-classic favourites of Bryan's that he knew and loved so well that he felt he could do them true justice by re-interpreting them for a contemporary market.
"My solo album is a guide to my taste", he explained. "I'm as much a fan as everybody else."
The album contained a hit-single in Bob Dylan's 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' which was transformed into a surging rock number, complete with sound effects and Bryan's doom-laden vocal.
In the sphere of rock music the idea of recording 'standards' had been virtually ignored. Therefore, 'These Foolish Things' broke new ground and was quickly imitated by other artists.

ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE — July, 1974

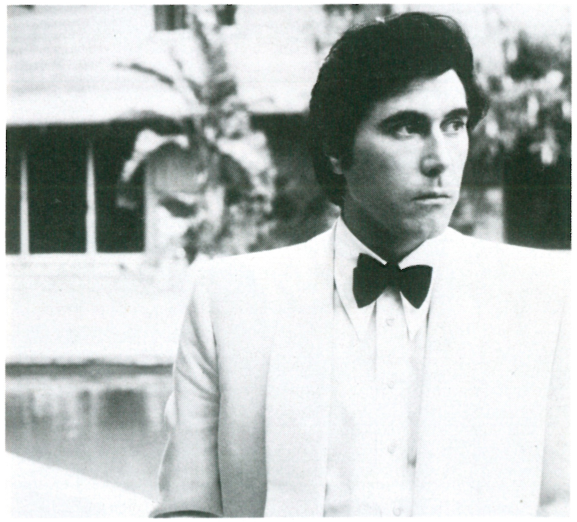
The excellence of Roxy's third album 'Stranded' was followed by Bryan's second solo album. Again, a collection of songs by others, with the exception of the title-track. The mood of 'Another Time, Another Place' was different from 'These Foolish Things'. It sounded more lush and decadent. Bryan said: "These Foolish Things' was the prototype, this is the deluxe model."
By now, Bryan was hailed as the 'new image' of pop and found himself asked about his image as much as his music. "What I really enjoy is taking one look and putting it with another that doesn't normally go with it', he explained, advocating that same juxtaposition of style he had applied in songwriting.

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL — December 19th, 1974

Just before Christmas '74 Bryan resumed his solo activities with a short set of concerts - the first live 'solo' performances he'd ever undertaken. The final concert took place at London's most prestigious venue, The Royal Albert Hall (which hadn't been made available for a rock concert for years). Tickets sold out within hours. Backed by a 50-piece orchestra and a rock combo in evening dress, Bryan performed material from his two solo albums to a tumultous reception.
"It felt very strange at first - completely different from being onstage with Roxy. I'd never been so nervous in all my life."

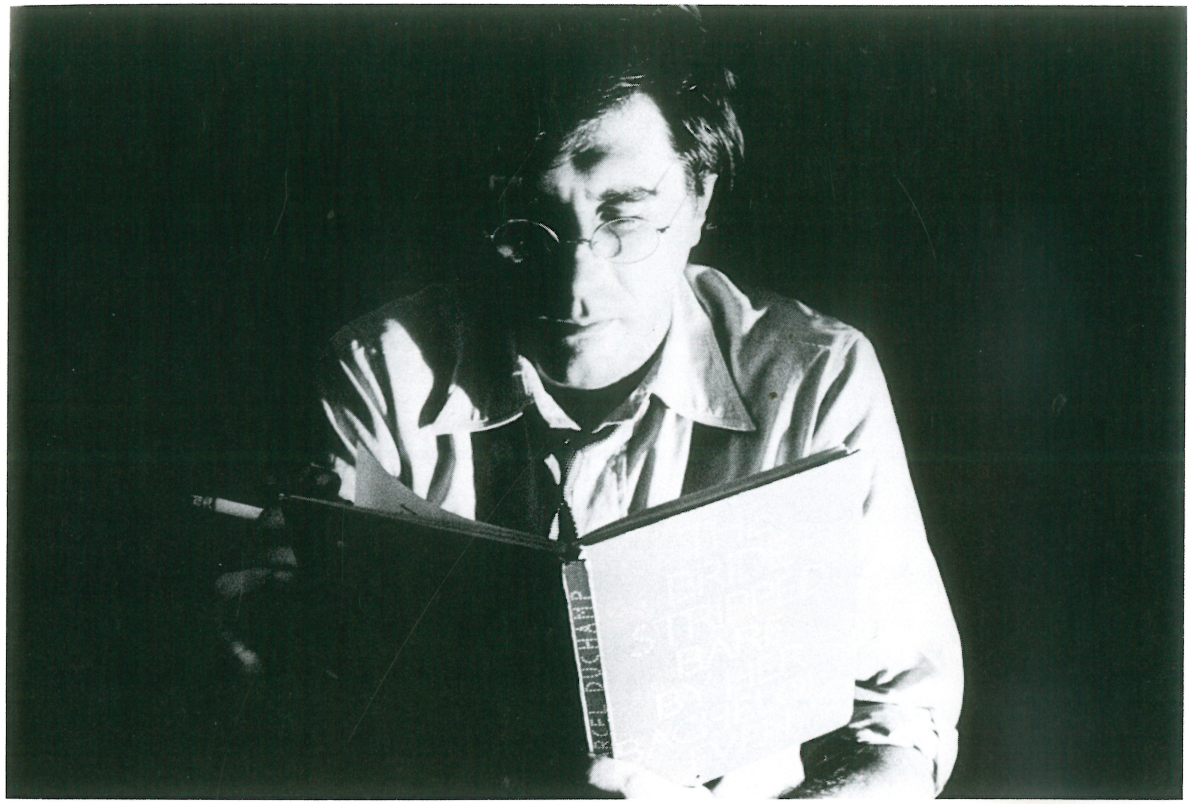
EXTENDED PLAY — August, 1976

Way back in the 'sixties there existed a type of record which was everyone's favourite - a phenomenon in itself - called the EP. An Extended Play disc had four tracks, all equally strong - and a lavish pictorial sleeve.
As much someone who cherishes the past as someone who ventures into the unknown, Bryan released this disc as both a tribute to, and a revival of, the EP's forgotten virtuosity. The songs - 'The Price Of Love', 'Shame, Shame, Shame', 'Heart On My Sleeve', 'It's Only Love' - covered four distinctive rock modes: three classic 'sixties styles - White American Cleancut, Black Twelve-Bar Ethnic, English Mopcut Sophisticated and an excursion into Seventies Laid-Back.



LET'S STICK TOGETHER — September, 1976

After the huge successes of the single 'Let's Stick Together' and the Extended Play, Bryan's third solo album 'Let's Stick Together' was released. Half the tracks were pop-classics, as before, but the rest were new versions of several of Bryan's own songs previously recorded on Roxy albums. If the first solo album was characterised by its sense of fun, the second by a lush romantic gravity, 'Let's Stick Together' stressed above all the pure energy of rock. From the Everly Brothers' frenzied 'The Price Of Love' to the luxuriant rendering of the classic 'You Go To My Head', from the dulcet melancholy of 'Sea Breezes' to the sinister restraint of 'Casanova', Bryan ranged across the whole pop-rock spectrum and delivered a superbly-paced album of music vibrant with his singular touch.

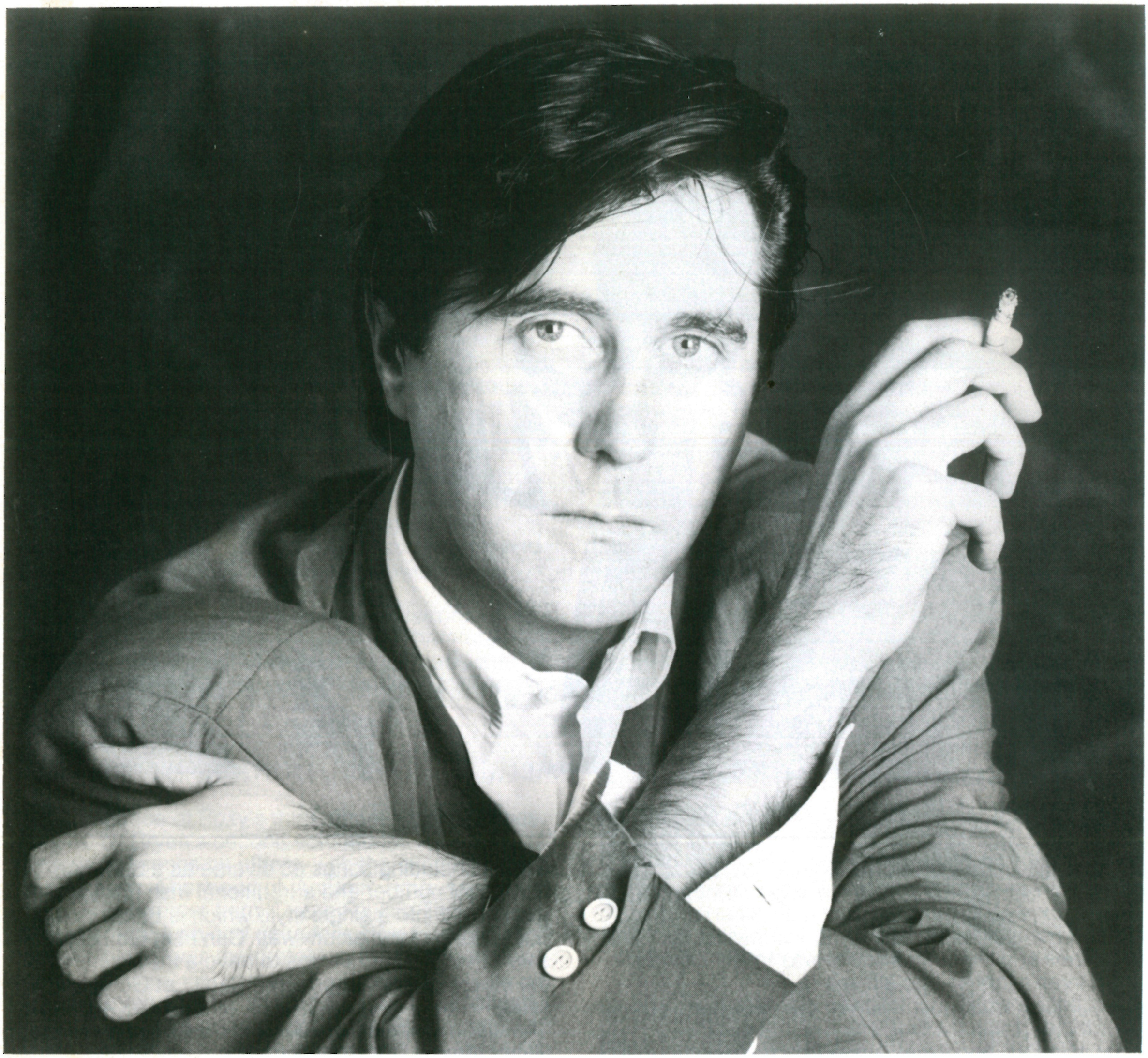


IN YOUR MIND — March, 1977

'In Your Mind' was Bryan's first solo album consisting entirely of self-penned songs. It was an intense musical experience with an almost physical emotional appeal. The album featured an all-star cast of over 20 musicians and the overall sound was totally different from Bryan's former solo albums.
An extensive world-tour followed the release of 'In Your Mind'. It was the first time Bryan undertook a large solo tour, and it was a good occasion to perform many songs from his solo albums which hadn't been done before.
The concerts still remain fixed in the mind: thrusting irresistably forward on a flow of energy, driven by the superb musicians Bryan had assembled around him. Among others, Bryan took along famous session guitarist Chris Spedding, who also played on the album. Spedding's guitar-playing complemented Bryan's vocals perfectly - especially in 'Love Me Madly Again' the impact and emotional drive was enormous. The live set also featured a full brass-section and backing-chorus which resembled a 'sixties soul revue'.

THE BRIDE STRIPPED BARE — April, 1978

Undoubtedly, this album is one of Bryan's most important solo efforts. It perfectly unites the two seperate threads which characterised his career: the writing of songs destined to become pop classics, and the interpretation of songs already established as such. Both his own compositions and those of other writers (including songs as diverse as a Sam and Dave soul number and a traditional Irish folk tune) were fused into a single style which is Bryan's own.
Lode-stone of the album was 'Can't Let Go'. Bryan said: "Every Album seems to have a track where all the others gravitate from and 'Can't Let Go' was that song."
The album title was drawn from the first part of the title of Marcel Duchamp's epic and enigmatic 'sculpture'.
"One of my favourite artists is Marcel Duchamp", Bryan explained. "His big masterpiece was called 'The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors Even' which is quite an amazing piece of work. He used to do artwork as well as regular paintings, things called ready-mades which would be objects from everyday life which you just sign or do something to personalize them and I felt it was applicable to me doing other people's songs and putting my stamp, my autograph on them".
For 'The Bride Stripped Bare' Bryan assembled an intriguing ensemble of English and American musicians in the unlikely location of Switzerland.



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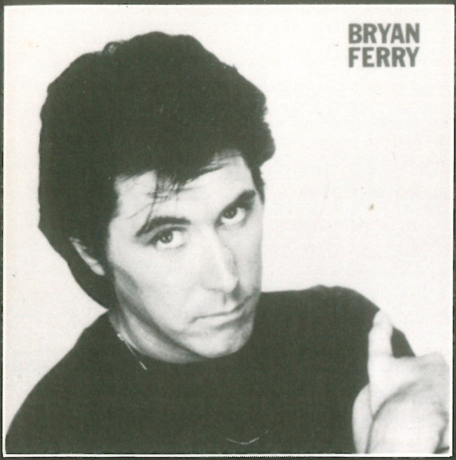

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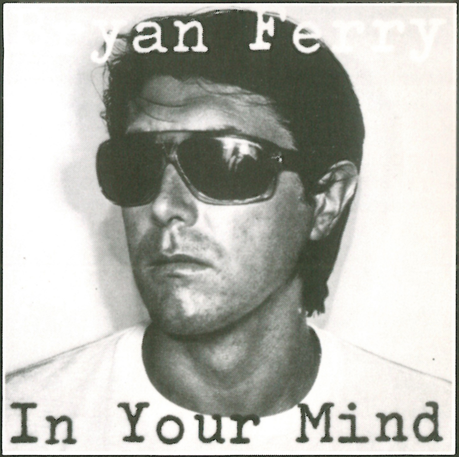

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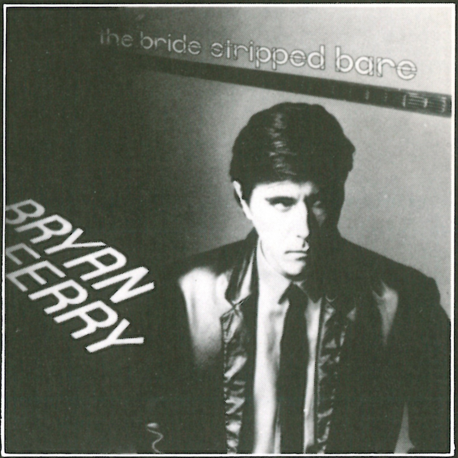

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